

Opioids with Abuse-Deterrent Properties: A tool to help curb prescription opioid abuse in North Carolina

The prescription drug abuse problem in North Carolina is severe and escalating.

- **1,358 North Carolinians** died in 2014 due to an opioid overdose – a **7% increase** from 2013.
- In North Carolina, the number of drug overdose deaths, a majority of which are from prescription drugs, has **doubled** from 1999-2013.
- North Carolina's annual healthcare costs due to opioid abuse is an estimated over **\$582 million annually** – \$59 per person.
- For county-by-county estimates on drug poisoning deaths in North Carolina, visit the CDC report here: <http://blogs.cdc.gov/nchs-data-visualization/drug-poisoning-mortality/>
- A 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) reported that:
 - Nearly **70%** of people who abuse prescription drugs got them from a friend or relative (bought, stolen, or given for free).
 - **84%** of those say the prescription was originally obtained through a doctor.

How OADPs work.

Opioids with Abuse-Deterrent Properties (OADPs) incorporate technology intended to make abuse of prescription pain medications more difficult, including a number of different formulations that create physical and chemical barriers to prevent chewing, crushing, cutting, grating or grinding or barriers that resist extraction of the opioid from the formulation using common solvents like water or alcohol.

OADPs are another important tool to help deter abuse and save lives.

- Studies have shown that the reformulation of an opioid product that includes abuse-deterrent properties has resulted in substantial and sustained reductions in abuse of that opioid product including a **50 percent reduction in diversion**, which includes robberies of the product.
- Law enforcement has reported significant drops in the demand and street prices of opioids after reformulation, compared to before.

OADPs will save North Carolina costs associated with prescription drug abuse.

- The use of OADPs could save over **\$1 billion in benefits** because of lower healthcare costs, lower criminal justice costs, and higher workplace productivity.
 - **\$430 million** in medical cost savings;
 - **\$100 million** in criminal justice cost savings; and
 - **\$476 million** in workplace productivity.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has called OADP a “priority.”

The FDA has stated that the “development of abuse-deterrent products is a priority.” To date, the FDA has approved labeling for six opioids as meeting the characteristics of an abuse-deterrent, and has reported that there are an additional 30 abuse-deterrent opioids in development by various companies, including a generic.

North Carolina must pass a law to increase access to OADPs.

North Carolina legislators have the opportunity to make policy solutions to the drug abuse problem a priority and pass a law in the 2016 Legislative Session that will make OADPs more widely available.